



Boone County Conservation District
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For immediate release

Soil Quality Field Day Sat., March 20

(Burlington, Kentucky 08 March 2010) Join the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) on Sat., March 20 from 1:30—4:30 p.m. to look at one of the most important, but often overlooked, factors in your farming success – soil. The field day will be held at Farm Haven in Union, home of Bruce and Stuart Ferguson's Petting Zoo and Corn Maze. Topics for the workshop will focus on crop and pasture field concerns, including soil structure, texture, and organic matter; soil compaction; and soil nitrogen. Instructors include John Graham, NRCS State Soil Quality Coordinator; Sid Brantly, NRCS State Grazing Specialist; and NRCS District Conservationist Ed Thompson Jr. The workshop is sponsored locally by the Boone County Conservation District.

To get to Farm Haven, take Old US 42 through Union to Tadpole Lane, turn left into Farm Haven. (Located next to the Union YMCA Pool.) Follow the Conservation Field Day signs. Following a brief orientation in the barn, we will take to the field. **Bring your own chair. Dress for the weather!** Be prepared for walking over crop fields and pastures. In the event of extremely inclement weather, the workshop will be rescheduled. Reservations are requested, but are not required, which will enable us to contact you if the workshop is rescheduled. Call 859-586-7903 or E-mail Sally.Aaron@ky.nacdnet.net by Wed. March 17 to reserve your spot.

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For information about this news release, contact Mary Kathryn Dickerson at 859-586-7903 or E-mail mary.dickerson@ky.nacdnet.net.

Importance of soil quality. Soil quality is the capacity of a specific kind of soil to function within its natural abilities to produce food and fiber, such as corn, fruits and vegetables, and forage for feed for livestock pasture. Soil quality is also the ability of the soil not only to maintain productivity for plants and animals, but the ability to support human health and habitation. This can affect the way we live and function at present and definitely in the future. As a crop or livestock producer you may be able to improve crop production yields by managing soil organic matter. Increased soil organic matter also reduces the need for adding nitrogen and phosphorus, and will increase the water holding capacity of the soil. Crops are better able to withstand drought when infiltration and water holding capacity are increased. Soils managed for organic matter may also suppress disease organisms, which could reduce pesticide needs. The benefits of improved soil quality can be felt by the community as dust, allergens, and pathogens in the air decline. Sediment and nutrient loads in surface water are reduced, and storm water runoff decreases. Ground and surface water quality improve because better structure, infiltration, and biological activity make soil a more effective filter. And, wildlife habitat is improved when residue management is improved.

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